

Feral Hog Task Force Meeting

August 1, 2017

1:30 pm

Board Room

#1 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

Arkansas Agriculture Department Secretary Wes Ward called the meeting to order. Secretary Ward welcomed all in attendance and asked the members present to introduce themselves and state who they represent. Ward then asked the audience and advisory members to introduce themselves and state who they represent.

Based on nominations made at the previous meeting, Secretary Ward was elected chair of the task force, and Jeff Crow, Director of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, was elected vice-chair.

The task force then considered and approved the following individuals that had been nominated to serve as advisory members: Adam McClung, Executive Vice President, Arkansas Cattlemen's Association; Thurman Booth, Arkansas State Director for USDA APHIS Wildlife Services; Mike Hoy, USDA Wildlife Services; James Baker USDA; Mike Sullivan, USDA NRCS; Bo Sloan, USFWS White River Refuge; Norman Wagoner, USFS Ouachita National Forest; Cherie Hamilton, USFS Ozark National Forest; and Dr. Sue Weinstein, Arkansas Department of Health.

Thurman Booth, Arkansas Wildlife Service State Director of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture, provided an overview of the agency's work on feral hog population reduction strategies over the past several years. He stated that APHIS appreciates being a part of the task force and is ready to help.

A representative from the Natural Resource Conservation Service reported on lessons learned from the agency's pilot program for reducing the population of feral hogs that has been available in eight counties in Arkansas for approximately four years. The program offers financial assistance for traps with camera surveillance. Time limitations and a lack of technical expertise have limited the success of the program.

A representative from the Dale Bumpers White River National Wildlife Refuge spoke about the population of feral hogs at the refuge and the environmental damage they cause.

Dr. Sue Weinstein, Arkansas Department of Health Public Health Veterinarian, deals with major diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans and is working with Dr. Doss on a One Health Plan. The One Health initiative strives to bring together scientists, physicians, and veterinarians to work inclusively on animal, environment, and human health issues. Dr. Weinstein stated that feral hogs can carry major diseases such as Brucellosis, E.coli, Lepto, Trichinellosis, and Pseudorabies.

The members discussed the possibility of Kaput, a Warfarin-based feral hog toxicant, being marketed in Arkansas. Director Jeff Crow provided an overview of the discussion that took place on this subject at

the Arkansas House and Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development meeting that occurred on July 20, 2017. Task force members requested that the minutes and exhibits from the July 20 meeting be provided for their individual review. Director Terry Walker and Brandi Reynolds, Agri Program Manager with the Arkansas State Plant Board, explained the process for this type of product to be registered for use after approval from the federal government. It appears that the Kaput manufacturers are hoping to market this product as early as the fall.

Concerns were raised about the impact of the toxicant on humans and non-target animal species that consume the meat from a feral hog that has ingested the toxicant. The presence of the poison is detected by internal muscle tissue and fat areas of the hog turning a blueish color. Questions were raised about the length of time from ingestion to discoloration of the animal tissue. It was determined that more information and research on the product are needed.

Further discussion followed on what Australia uses to control their hog populations. Sodium Nitrate was mentioned. The length of time Sodium Nitrate takes, plus the effect it has on the hogs, was discussed.

Dr. Don White, representing the University of Arkansas, informed the task force about a recent study that looked at Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in feral hogs. Task force members requested that the study be provided for their individual review.

Patrick Fisk, Deputy Director, Livestock and Poultry Commission, discussed the need for a research exemption in existing statutes to allow a catch and release program to monitor the migratory patterns of feral hogs. Arkansas law, A.C.A. 2-28-502, currently prohibits "catch and release". The issue presented is an example of legislative issues the Task Force may need to recommend that the legislature consider changing during the next legislative session.

Discussion was held on speakers and topics for future meetings. The idea of a survey to gather public opinion was discussed and tabled until the next meeting.

The next meeting was set for August 23, 2017 @ 1:30 pm.